EPA Wally → Lynn
M. Masaitis

Monsanto 162

Caribou Co. Sun 11-9-89

Monsanto Meets New EPA Standards; FMC Notes High Cost of Compliance

Tighter standards on radioactive releases from hospitals, nuclear power plants, and even elemental phosphorus manufacturers has brought criticism from Idaho Sen. Jim McClure about the "one-sided approach of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency toward regulating manufacturing industries that could cause serious damage to southeastern Idaho's economy."

EPA's reduced national emission standard for radionuclides from elemental phosphorus plants was issued Oct. 31 and calls for a new standard of 2 curies per year, down from the former standard of 21 curies.

FMC's plant in Pocatello will not meet the new standard, even after spending several million dollars on smoke stack scrubbers. FMC emits about 10 curies per year, EPA has estimated.

Monsanto Company's Soda Springs plant has an actual stack emission rate of less than 1 curie, as measured in 1988, local plant officials said Monday, and easily meets the new standard.

Monsanto attributes its low radionuclide emission rate to the installation, at significant capital cost, of state-of-the-art scrubber technology in September, 1987.

As part of the Southeast Idaho Radiation Exposure Study, EPA documented this reduction with its ambient monitoring network. Their results show airborne radionuclide concentrations near the plant to be right at background levels.

Wayne Bliss, head of EPA's Office of Radiation Programs in Las Vegas, stated at a press briefing in June that these results did not justify their recommendation for further regulation of the industry.

C.M. McCullough, plant manager of Monsanto's Soda Springs facility, stated that the improvements in particulate emissions which led to this reduction in radionuclides "are consistent with our long-term commitment to exceed regulatory requirements whenever possible."

McCullough, refering to EPA's announcement, said, "We researched the control of radionuclide emissions from our plant, spent $10 million to reduce those releases, and lived up to our policy of continuous improvement in the quality of the environment."

An *Idaho State Journal* story reported Marc Bowman, the plant's environmental supervisor at FMC, as saying his company would either have to upgrade existing equipment or design new technology to bring its calciners into compliance with the new emission standard.

The article further noted EPA estimated it will cost FMC over $13 million to install a venturi scrubber that would control the radioactive emissions and cost $1.7 million every year to operate.

For the past week, Sen. McClure has been in direct contact with both EPA and the FMC Corporation, the White House, and the Office of Management and Budget regarding a new EPA radionuclide emission standard which could cripple segments of Idaho's phosphate industry.

"Once again EPA is generalizing, and they've gone way too far in my view," McClure said. "I think there's a danger to the stability of industries like FMC if we're not able to get them to adopt a reasonable position. And I'm absolutely dedicated to seeing that they don't go too far," he said.

"I fear what we are seeing on the part of EPA is new unrealistic emissions regulations, with little if any regard for the economic consequences and a devil-may-care attitude if hundreds of people end up getting thrown out of work," said McClure, who suggested that the new EPA process for phosphate plants is similar to the one that eventually shut down the lead, silver and zinc smelter in Kellogg.

McClure said negotiations between EPA, FMC Corporation, and his office have resulted in less than satisfactory results.

"Their new emission standards have little relation to protecting human health and safety, and there appears to be little if any flexibility," McClure stated. "I'd bet there are more health risks in throwing hundreds of people out of work than there are in creating ridiculous emission standards."

McClure referred to proposed EPA standards that would reduce the lifetime risk by the "most exposed" individuals to one in 10,000.

"Under those standards, a 70-year-old man would have a 1-in-10,000 risk of increased cancer if he was born, never left, and died in the most exposed position in FMC's Pocatello plant," McClure said.

"I'm trying to say there has to be some reasonableness in all of this," McClure added. "Nothing is 100 percent safe. Driving, sleeping, even working at EPA–all of those actions have risks. But there are severe, even catastrophic economic consequences which translate into very personal human terms when men and women are thrown out of work because of overzealous regulations."

EPA recently completed a two-year study examining exposure to slag and stack emissions from Monsanto and FMC. Phosphate ore contains uranium which is radioactive, and that has been the concern of the EPA in their study to determine what levels of radon, a by-product of uranium, was present in the communities of Pocatello and Soda Springs.

Their findings were that there was the possibility of an increase in cancer related deaths on the rate of about one or two per 10,000 people at maximum constant exposure for a 70-year life period. When compared to other voluntary risks such as diet, smoking, and non-use of seat belts, EPA officials said the radionuclide risk was very small in comparison.

SSWBA Auction

Soda Springs Women's Bowling Association will have their fall meeting and craft auction on Nov. 15, at 6 p.m. at Tosoiba Lanes. The cost is one craft item.

A $25 cash prize will be given to the league best represented at the meeting (to be added to their prize fund).

3.2 0003

RECEIVED
NOV1 31989
IDAHO OPERATIONS OFFICE

9.20002

6341